

Transfiguration Sunday - Year B



(part of "Transfiguration" by Lewis Bowman)

Greetings

Welcome to email/online worship for this week. As we come into an unexpected lock down again, you may find that you have some unexpected strong emotions: why us in the country, why not just Melbourne, sadness that you cannot keep plans, anger that there are some who will be even more isolated in the coming days without their support networks. Perhaps though we can acknowledge these feelings and then move past them to use this time to focus on our priorities, our faith, our relationships with one another.

Whether in lock down or not, we always have the ability to worship, God is not far away, we have small blessings in all circumstances, we should praise and be grateful. As always if you need a friend, reach out, if you need support from your Church family please call.

May God richly bless us all in the coming week as we enter into the season of Lent. Peace, Cathie

Gathering as God's People

Acknowledgement of Country

For thousands of years Indigenous people have walked in this land, on their own country. Their relationship with the land is at the center of their lives. We acknowledge the Brayakaulung People of the Gunai Kurnai Nation, past, present, and emerging leaders, and their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.

Call to worship

God comes and does not keep silent,
God calls to the heavens and earth,
to God's faithful ones.

We answer God's call.

God calls us each by name,
chosen and loved,
known and seen.

**We answer God's call,
we gather to worship.**

Prayer of the Day

On top of a mountain,
the disciples see an amazing sight,
we can only imagine what they,
must have thought,
but Jesus was with them,
so, we know they were safe and secure,
they were in his protection,
just like we are today.

Thank you, God, for showing
us the long history and bright future
of you people, from Moses and Elijah,
to Peter, James, and John,
help us to find confidence in their stories
to follow you in our own lives,
to love each other,
to be kind to each other,
and to love you
every day of our lives. Amen.

MP 712: Turn your eyes upon Jesus (chorus only three times)

[Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus by Alan Jackson - YouTube](#) [country]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTZtKoAwf0U> [gospel]

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Almighty God,
our loving parent,
We come before you in praise and adoration,
thankful for your grace and love,
for your communication with us,
through the prophets,
through your Word and Spirit
guiding us always towards a life
lived in service of you and each other.
We come, broken, doubtful, and fearful,
but we come,
trusting in you, yearning to know more,
to see more, to love more.
We come not as fully formed perfect specimens,
instead we come as we are,
with all our wonders, hopes, and desires.
Grant us the wisdom to follow you
and to realize your kingdom.
We come today to give thanks for your presence,
in our times of trouble and doubt,
uncertainty and fear.
Like Peter, James, and John,
we too scale mountains to see you,
to know you, to understand what you
are calling us to be.
Grant us the wisdom to follow you
and to realize your kingdom.
We come, ever loving God,
to acknowledge our failings,
and to try to do better.
As we seek to live a new way,
to carry out your mission and commandments,
we ask for your guidance and support,
care and compassion,
in the knowledge that
even though we may not always succeed,
your love is eternal and unconditional.

Grant us the wisdom to follow you,
and to realize your kingdom. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

God is light, in him there is no darkness at all.

If we walk in the light, as God is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,

and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5,7)

Hear then, Christ's words of grace to us...

"Our sins are forgiven", **thanks be to God!**

Receiving God's Word

Old Testament Reading

2 Kings 2:1-12 (NLT)

Elijah Taken into Heaven

2 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal. ² And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Bethel."

But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!" So they went down together to Bethel.

³ The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

⁴ Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Jericho."

But Elisha replied again, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together to Jericho.

⁵ Then the group of prophets from Jericho came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?"

"Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

⁶ Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to the Jordan River."

But again Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So they went on together.

⁷ Fifty men from the group of prophets also went and watched from a distance as Elijah and Elisha stopped beside the Jordan River. ⁸ Then Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it. The river divided, and the two of them went across on dry ground!

⁹ When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away."

And Elisha replied, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor."

¹⁰ "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah replied. "If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won't."

¹¹ As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!" And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 50:1-6 (TPT)

God Has Spoken

¹ The God of gods, the mighty Lord himself, has spoken!

He shouts out over all the people of the earth
in every brilliant sunrise and every beautiful sunset,
saying, "Listen to me!"

² God's glory-light shines out of the Zion-realm
with the radiance of perfect beauty.

³ With the rumble of thunder he approaches;
he will not be silent, for he comes with an ear splitting sound!
All around him are furious flames of fire,
and preceding him is the dazzling blaze of his glory.

⁴ Here he comes to judge his people!

He summons his court with heaven and earth as his jury, saying,

⁵ "Gather all my faithful people,

my godly ones whose hearts are one with me—
those who have entered into my holy covenant
by sacrifices upon the altar.”

⁶ And the heavens declare his justice:

“God himself will be their judge,
and he will judge them with righteousness!”

Pause in his presence

New Testament Reading

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 (TPT)

³ Even if our gospel message is veiled, it is only veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ for their minds have been blinded by Satan, the god of this age, leaving them in unbelief. Their blindness keeps them from seeing the dayspring light of the wonderful news of the glory of Jesus Christ, who is the *divine* image of God.

⁵ We don't preach ourselves, but rather the lordship of Jesus Christ, for we are your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, “Let brilliant light shine out of darkness,” is the one who has cascaded his light into us—the brilliant dawning light of the glorious knowledge of God as we gaze into the face of Jesus Christ.

TiS 154: Great is your faithfulness

[Great Is Thy Faithfulness | Maranatha! Music \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

Children's Talk - Out Of The Ordinary

Some stories are very hard to tell.

Some things that happen are very out of the ordinary!

How can you explain what it is like when God does something special
and you are right in the middle of it?

Here is a story like that.

One day Jesus went for a walk

up a mountain

with three of his friends—

Peter, James and John.

To begin with,

it was a nice, ordinary walk.

But when they got to the top,
they were right in the middle
of God doing something special.
Suddenly all kinds of strange
and wonderful things began to happen.
A dazzling light
seemed to make Jesus' face
and clothes start shining!
Two wise old men from long, long ago
appeared and talked with Jesus...
A big cloud came down around them all.
And then God spoke loud and clear, saying,
"Jesus is my Son and I love him very much!"
How special.
How scary.
How spectacular.

- What was all that about?
 - If you had been there, what do you think you would say about it?
 - How would you tell the story?
- Let's listen to how Mark told the story...

Gospel Reading

Mark 9:2-9 (TPT)

² After six days, Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, Jacob and John, and hiked up a high mountain to be alone. And Jesus' appearance was dramatically altered, for he was transfigured before their very eyes! ³ His clothing sparkled and became glistening white—whiter than any bleach in the world could make them. ⁴ Then suddenly, right in front of them, Moses and Elijah appeared, and they spoke with Jesus.

⁵ Peter blurted out, "Good Rabbi, *this is so amazing to see the three of you together!* Why don't we stay here and set up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah?" ⁶ (For all of the disciples were in total fear, and Peter didn't have a clue what to say.) ⁷ Just then, a radiant cloud began to spread over them, enveloping them all. And God's voice suddenly spoke from the cloud, saying, "This is my most dearly loved Son—always listen to him!"

⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, the disciples saw only Jesus, for Moses and Elijah had faded away.

⁹ As they all hiked down the mountain together, Jesus ordered them, “Don’t tell anyone of what you just witnessed. Wait until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”

Response Prayer

Creator God, who said “let light shine out of darkness”.

May your light shine in this world even more brightly, **so that all may see.**

Beloved Son of God, whom we are called to listen to.

May your voice be heard in this world even more clearly, **so that all may hear.**

Holy Spirit of God, who comforts and encourages, who guides and strengthens.

May your ways be known in this world,

so that all may come to know the love of God. Amen.

TiS 675: Shine, Jesus Shine

[Shine Jesus Shine \(worship video w/ lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

Reflection of the Day

In the church lectionary, there are a very few specific Bible narrative stories that essentially appear annually at the same time of year. We have Christmas, Easter and the Pentecost stories from Acts, and today’s Transfiguration narrative. The compilers of the lectionary deemed today’s story that important.

It is a richly glorious and visually exciting story. It puts Jesus literally up there with God in terms of being other worldly, emphasizing divinity over humanity. It encourages worship of Jesus’ majesty, from all those who pertain to be his followers.

However, it is not exactly the easiest story in the Bible to find something fresh and realistic to say—other than the debate about the benefits of staying a while with God (perhaps for prayer/study or connection with the divine) against the benefits of returning to the world and getting on with the job of serving God in the realities of human challenge and suffering.

Peter and James and John could not help being awe-struck by the presence of the illuminated Jesus, and perhaps more so by the sight of the biblical worthies Elijah and Moses.

It is worth noting however that once poise returned, the first thing they set about doing was a very practical and down-to-earth response—namely using their hands to build physical shelters. Trying to make sense of what they had witnessed, they could not (in their frightened state), think of anything else to do than build something with their hands. It was not the case they held hands and prayed, opened their hearts to each other and compared spiritual experience and personal faith, but instead they organized themselves to do something very worldly and down-to-earth. Whatever their reasoning—might it have been to establish a permanent memorial for the occasion, or protective safe shelters for the three esteemed central characters, Jesus, Elijah, and Moses—the fact is they got practical.

There are many ways for us to experience God. We find God in church, in the singing of hymns, the feeling of worship, the study of the Bible, in discussions with others as we debate texts. We find God when on retreat with others or self as we take ourselves away from worldly concerns. We find God on the mountain top, in the forest, by the seashore, in the great cathedrals of the world. That is the beauty of God.

We find God in joy and we find God in brokenness, in the love of another in the emotion of loss. That is the beauty of God.

When we find God and the dazzling Jesus shimmering in light we find the experience more beautiful than anything imaginable. It is invigorating, it is comforting, it is assuring, it is the key to the door of further life experiences that become even more astonishing and fulfilling.

Let's look at this passage from a slightly different perspective.

Have you ever stood on the top of a mountain – right at the summit? It's an exhilarating experience – an uninterrupted view... There is something special about the mountain top. Maybe it's the challenge of getting there. Perhaps it's because mountains seem to mark a boundary between earth and sky and a place from which we can look out into the infinite. And perhaps this is why we use the image of a mountain top experience to try and describe those almost indescribably experiences of mystery and wonder – those times when we have felt close to God.

As the disciples climbed the mountain with Jesus, they would have expected something big was going to happen. Scripture is full of stories of big things happening on mountains – Abraham and Isaac; Moses received the Law; Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal; the list goes on. On this day, on this mountain, the disciples experienced the transfiguration of Jesus, they saw the prophets of old in Moses and Elijah, and they heard the voice of God speaking to them.

I think that, without realizing, on that day, the disciples became transfigured – they were changed in the presence of God. We might not have been on that mountain top, but as followers of Christ, we too are changed – constantly changing, maybe even without realizing it. We shine the light of Christ to those around us.

Mountain top experiences don't last forever. Jesus and the disciples had to leave the mountain top as there were things to do. Jesus was headed to the cross, and the disciples were following not knowing where that was going to lead. This is our call as well – to follow Christ wherever that might lead. But we go, knowing that we are with Christ, and that something big is about to happen. Like the disciples, we can't have confidence in what the future may or may not bring, but we can have complete confidence and trust in the One who brings it.

But what do our mountain top experiences and encounters with Jesus illicit in us? Is it for hoarding the special moment, for self-fulfillment, for the inner transfiguration of our souls only? Or, are all our encounters and spiritual awakenings, for the purpose of somehow transforming us into people who seek to use our hands, our voices, our personal stories, our gifts and talents, for very down-to-earth intents of constructing something good, concrete and lasting in the world?

Our questions to ponder this week are:

- Have you had 'mountain top experiences' of faith? Has it been difficult to come back down to earth afterward?
- Are you living a life that is letting the light of Christ shine through you?

TiS 746: The heavens shall declare

[The Heavens Shall Declare Geoff Bullock - YouTube](#)

[no lyrics]

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Ever loving God,
we pray today for your church.
As Christian communities
all across Australia and the World,
face new challenges, pain
and an uncertain future,
we pray for the wisdom to see
new opportunities for growth and renewal,
even in these difficult times.

We pray for this church,
gathered here, and in the wider community,
as it continues to work your kingdom,
and to carry out your mission,
we pray for strength to carry on,
even as it may seem more difficult
than ever to spread your word.

As Jesus' life is revealed in our holy books
so too let his love be revealed in our community today.

We pray with all those living in fear,
those who have had to flee their homeland,
who do not feel safe in their own homes,
those who are marginalized because of
their sexuality, race, or gender,
or any other reason
your beloved children are attacked.

Help them to see,
your all-encompassing love,
and help us to show that same love.

We pray for our world,
as we continue to face
crisis after crisis, and struggle
to protect and preserve
your wondrous creation,
as we feel helpless in the face
of wars raging and lives ruined,
we ask for boldness,
to speak truth to power,

to find new ways to create change,
and we pray that those
with the power to do so,
will find the strength in you
to do what is right
rather than that which easy.

Today we particularly remember Carol and Judy
recovering from medical procedures
and all those in our congregation who are unwell.

Lord we bring you the prayers of our hearts
(a time of silence)

All of these things – the spoken and the unspoken

We pray these things in the name
of Jesus, who is revealed to us
and calls us to do his work
who taught us to pray (the Lord's prayer)
Amen.

Offering Hymn

TiS 155: How great though art

[How Great Thou Art with lyrics performed by Chris Rice - YouTube](#)

[How Great Thou Art \(Lyric Video\) | Celtic Worship - YouTube](#) [contemporary Celtic]

Offering Prayer

Merciful, giving God,
we come before you,
as Peter, James, and John, did before us,
in awe and in love,
shrouded in your grace
and thankful for your gifts,
seeking to grow in compassion,
and care for all who we meet.
We offer these tokens,

of money, time, and talent,
given back to you
as a sign of our commitment to your church,
in the hope that its mission and ministry
will continue to flourish
and grow your kingdom,
here and everywhere. Amen.

Being Sent on God's Mission

Closing Prayer

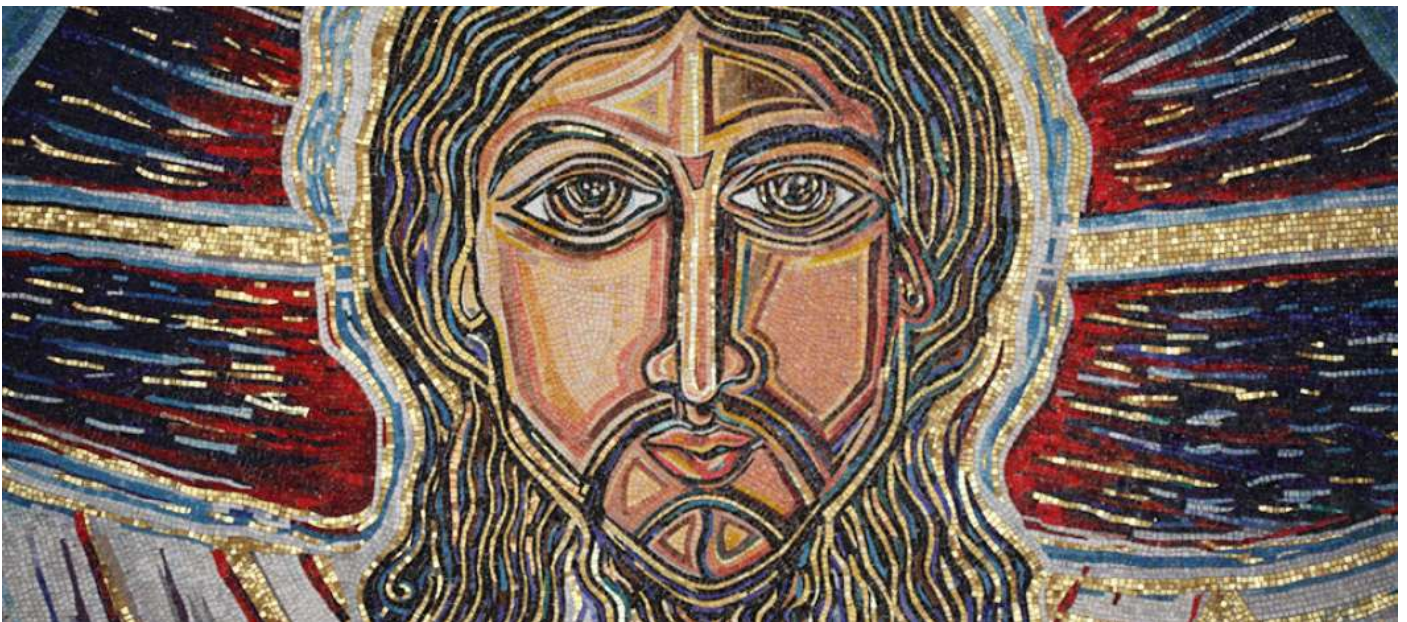
Help us today, O God,
to see you shining in Glory
as we scale our own mountains
as we seek to overcome
our own hurdles,
as we face fear and indecision
on our way to a better life
lived in love, with you.
Help us today, O God,
to find purpose
as we seek to serve you,
as we seek to serve one another,
as we look for ways we
can make change in this world,
to bring your promised
Kingdom ever closer to
all whom we meet.
Help us today, O God,
as we see Jesus in our own lives,
as we struggle to understand him,
as we try to carry out his mission,
as we attempt to bring
peace, love and faith to this
world of pain,
as we follow in the footsteps
of our ancestors in faith. Amen.

Sending Out

Just as Jesus chose to descend
the mountain once again,
We follow him back into the world
to bring love, healing and peace
to our communities.
May we go and serve
in the name of God almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
today, tomorrow and forever more.

Blessing

**Let us go out into the world this week,
shining the light of Christ to all those we encounter,
making God known in and through our lives. Amen**



Sources:

Pastor Leanne Davis - L3q1 pp. 95-99

Spill the Beans - Issue 37 pp.112-116

Additional Worship Resources for the week:

[One Hour of Praise & Worship on Piano - 17 contemporary Christian songs with lyrics - YouTube](#)